



# THE ACADEMY

WITH WHICH ARE INCORPORATED LITERATURE AND THE ENGLISH REVIEW

Edited by LORD ALFRED BRUCE DOUGLAS

No. 1915

JANUARY 16, 1909

PRICE THREEPENCE

## "SCORPIO." By J. A. CHALONER

He prides himself on the fact that he is a hard and terrible bitter. Indeed, he assures us that he has come to the conclusion that you can put a wicked man 'to sleep' with a sonnet in pretty much the same way that a prize-fighter puts his opponent to sleep with a finished blow. And not only does Mr. Chaloner believe in what we may term the sonnetorial fist, but he believes also in whips and scorpions, for the cover of his book is decorated with an angry-looking seven-thonged scourge, and he dubs the whole effort 'Scorpio.' So that when we look to the fair page itself we know what to expect. Nor are we disappointed. Mr. Chaloner goes to the opera. Being a good poet, he immediately writes a sonnet about it, the which, however, he calls 'The Devil's Horseshoe.' We reproduce it for the benefit of all whom it may concern:—

A fœdunt sight for a philosopher—  
Rich as Golconda's mine in lessons rare—  
That gem-bedeck'd "horse-shoe" at th' Opera,  
Replete with costly hags and matrons fair!  
His votaresses doth Mammon there array,  
His Amazonian Phalanx dread to face!

Figuratively speaking, we (Palmetto Press) might add that Mr. Chaloner steps forward as the champion of Shakespeare's memory, and lands, with the force of a John L. Sullivan, upon the point of the jaw of Mr. G. B. SHAW, owing to the latter's impertinent comments upon Shakespeare.

(Delivered, post-paid on receipt of two dollars, by registered mail, to PALMETTO PRESS, Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, U.S.A.)

To Mammon there do they their homage pay;  
Spangl'd with jewels, satins, silks and lace,  
Crones whose old bosoms in their corsets creak;  
Beldames whose slightest glances would fright a horse;  
Ghouls—when they speak one hears the grave-mole squeak—  
Their escorts *parvenus* of feature coarse.  
A rich array of Luxury and Vice!  
But, spite of them, the music's very nice.

"Here you have whips, scorpions, and a knock-out blow with a vengeance. The sonnet as a whole is not one which we can approve from a technical or a sentimental point of view, but it has points. Healey might have plumed himself on that line about the creaking corsets, and the last line, a *tour de force*, in its way reminds us of the withering ironies of Byron. It is only fair to Mr. Chaloner to add that not all his sonnets are concerned with back-biting. . . . Some of them show the tenderer emotions proper to a poet. We like him best, however, in his character as metrical bruiser. . . . His book is well worth possessing."—*The Academy*, August 8th, 1908.

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## LIFE AND LETTERS

SIR HUBERT VON HERKOMER has been giving his views on "Philistinism" and the nude in art. He is of opinion that "The noblest work of art is the representation of the human figure, and flesh-painting represents the highest work of the painter. When one produces a masterpiece in this direction it is nobody's business to inquire as to the identity of his model or as to what her moral character may have been." With all of which we can readily agree, but when Sir Hubert von Herkomer goes on to particular instances he gets on to dangerous ground. He says: "Some years ago I painted a life-size nude figure of a female, with a landscape background, and I attached to it the poet's line, 'All beautiful in naked purity.' I sent it to the Royal Academy and was told by a member of the Hanging Committee that, in the face of English prejudice, they dare not hang it in the room it deserved. As a fact, it practically emptied the room in which it was hung." It does not appear to have occurred to Sir Hubert von Herkomer that possibly the startling effect produced by his picture was not due solely to "Philistinism." For our part, we can only say that if the life-size female nude figure was painted in the same style as the life-size male clothed figures which he is in the habit of exhibiting at the Royal Academy, we are not surprised at the consternation it seems to have evoked. Perhaps the member of the Hanging Committee who said that they could not put the picture in the room it deserved was pulling Sir Hubert's leg. Might he not have been thinking of the cellar as the most suitable room? However, be that as it may, we are glad to hear that "in the end a German Philistine bought the picture and built it into the niche of his dining-room, where it evokes many expressions of appreciation," so that, on the whole, everything seems to have worked out for the best in the long run.

We are inclined to think that the Puritanism which is supposed to afflict the English in matters of art is greatly exaggerated. Objections to the nude in paint-

ing are, of course, made from time to time by silly people, but no particular notice is taken of them, and if it were not for the idiotic habit indulged by the lesser newspapers of giving violent prominence to any kind of non-sense which may be talked or written by any of the numerous half-witted cranks and agitators who infest, and always have infested, these islands, we should probably not hear even so much as we do on the subject. Anyone who is infected with the notion that prudery, generally speaking, is a specially English attribute should visit a French seaside place and compare its rigid regulations with our own free and easy seaside habits in the matter of sea-bathing.

We have received the following letter from Professor Skeat:

SIR,—May I be allowed to explain that the article on "Simplified Spelling" to which you refer in the last number of THE ACADEMY, at page 651, was not partly written (as you suppose) by "Professor Skeat," but by Walter W. Skeat, author of "Malay Magic" and "The Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula"?

When you speak of "the poets and writers of prose" who use English language "for the purposes of beauty," it would be interesting to know whether, amongst these, you include such writers as Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton. One object which the "Simplified Spelling Society" has before it is to induce people to ask themselves why it is that they spell as they do, and whether it is true that Shakespeare's works were originally printed with the spelling which we employ now? The very fact that spelling is now judged of by the eye instead of by the ear as formerly, is a severe practical satire upon our present methods. Whilst you would object to the use of "jogd," instead of "jogged," you may perhaps admit that "blest" is no more barbarous than "blessed."

A very great deal might be gained by the substitution of "giv" for "give," and by the tardy admission that there is no reason why *v* should not be admitted as a final letter like any other consonant. It would enable us to distinguish between "a live dog" and the verb "to liv." What matters much more is that if such a reform were carried out, there would be one anomaly the less for children to master. The ultimate result of many such reforms would be the saving of years of labour to millions of children, and the saving of large sums of money, for we might employ much shorter forms than those which we now use.

The objection which most people have to all such reform really goes back to the fact that they have forgotten their own early difficulties, and have no sympathy with or pity for the affliction to be endured by those who have yet to learn.

We really do claim, as collaborators, such poets as Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. All who will study their spelling will come to know much more about the subject than they do at present. It is precisely this want of knowledge which has wrought such invincible prejudice against the consideration of the question. WALTER W. SKEAT, Litt.D.

It would be interesting to know what Professor Skeat means by the first part of his letter. Are we to understand that the article on "Simplified Spelling" was not written by him, but by another person of the same name? In any case, Professor Skeat appears to accept responsibility for the article, and as we are not good at conundrums we shall not endeavour to solve this one. When we spoke of "the poets and writers of prose who use the English language for purposes of beauty" we were referring, of course, to living writers; one can't very well consult the opinion of dead writers. Our reference to Mr. Swinburne surely made our meaning obvious. When Professor Skeat invites us to ask ourselves "whether it is true that Shakespeare's works were originally printed with the spelling which we employ now" he seems to us to go dangerously near to impertinence. Professor Skeat must know that we are just as well aware as he is that the spelling in Shakespeare's time differed from the spell-

ing of our day. But that is neither here nor there, and the assumption of Professor Skeat that only very learned persons like himself are aware of what is a matter of common knowledge is an amusing instance of the arrogance of the "Professor" as opposed to the poet and the man of letters. What we said last week, and what we say again now, is that any proposals to change the spelling of the English language would require the sanction of those who use that language for the purpose of beauty in verse and prose—i.e., poets and writers of prose. To put the case quite frankly, we contend that a man who has written even half a dozen beautiful sonnets knows a great deal more about the English language than all the "profest students of English language" and all the dry-as-dust experts in etymology put together in a bracket squared. As to the difference between "blest" and "jogd," if Professor Skeat can't see it we are sorry for him. Does it not occur to him that "st" is a common collocation of letters and does not offend the eye for that reason? It occurs in such words as west, nest, rest, and a thousand others. Where is the word in the English language that ends in "gd"? We notice that in the article on "Simplified Spelling" the word importance is spelt "importans." That may be the way Mr. Archer and Professor Skeat pronounce the word, but it is the wrong way for all that. It may seem to Professor Skeat that his arguments in favour of simplified spelling are unanswerably convincing—in fact, he seems to have arrived at a state of mind in which he assumes that the mere fact that Professor Skeat says so settles the question once for all. The fact that his arguments are not considered convincing by those who have a knowledge of the English language which he can never hope to possess, should at any rate "giv him paus."

The great Mr. Horatio Bottomley's beautiful scheme for obtaining financial assistance from the public for the purposes of his defence does not seem to have survived the comments we made on it last week. At any rate, we can find no mention of it in the current issue of his noble journal. Ever since we took the liberty of refusing to insert in our advertisement columns the prospectus of the *John Bull* company the rage against us of Mr. Bottomley and his gallant lieutenant, the rejected of Constantinople, has gone on increasing in a truly alarming manner. This week we are pained to find that Mr. Bottomley has come to the conclusion that the editor of this paper is no gentleman. This is a crushing blow, especially coming from such a source, and he is feeling duly chastened. Curiously enough, the same indictment has been brought against him before now on at least two occasions: once by a taxi-cabman disturbed at his tea and compelled unwillingly to face the cold blasts of a winter's evening; and at another time by a bibulous butler, whose undue fondness for a cheerful glass had provoked rebuke. The evidence against him is accumulating in a disquieting fashion. Meanwhile, we note that Jim Crow does not deny the soft impeachment which we brought against him last week—namely and to wit, that when he stated in his paper that he had "received" for review copies of Oscar Wilde's collected works he was not writing with that strict accuracy which we are accustomed to expect from the friends of Mr. Bottomley. However, the matter is a small one, and as Mr. Bottomley has apparently withdrawn the wonderful financial scheme whereby the "burden" of his costs at the Guildhall should "fall on his own shoulders" and yet be wiped up by public subscription, we may dismiss him for the time being. We note, in this connection, that Messrs. Odhams, who are also associated in business with Mr. Bottomley, will

publish shortly a work in *belles lettres*, entitled "Bottomley's Book," and that this work "will include photo of author, with character-sketch by Herbert Vivian." We hope Mr. Vivian will give Mr. Bottomley a better character than he found himself able to bestow on the late Mr. Walter Pater. As for Mr. Vivian's opinion of the late Oscar Wilde we refer our readers to our correspondence column.

We are glad to be able to congratulate the Editor of the new weekly journal, *The Englishman*, on the distinct improvement which is noticeable in the quality of his matter. The article on Woman's Suffrage in the issue of January 13th is well written and well argued, if somewhat long-winded. But some gentleman, who writes under the heading "Editorial Notes," is badly in need of an editor. We quote:

Far from the *madding* crowd, as some madman once remarked. Talking of *madding*, how truly are my beloved countrymen herewith revealed. In my modest youth such a book (*sic*) might often be seen on many a modest table. It made me blush even then, however,—for my countrymen. Had it been properly written in good English—as thus, maddening—no man would have regarded it, I ween. But "madding" not being English at all, naturally achieved a "well-deserved success," as the reviewers have it. For at least in England we never, never will be slaves—at any rate to the degrading rules of grammar or King's English.

The writer of this extraordinary farrago of nonsense is evidently not aware that the words "Far from the madding crowd," used by Mr. Thomas Hardy as the title of one of his finest novels, are quoted from Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." Is there a schoolboy in England who does not know the line:

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife?

Anyone who is capable of saying that Mr. Hardy's great novel would not have been "regarded" if the title "had been properly written in good English" ought to be at once restrained from opportunities for making further "howlers." The word "madding" is, needless to say, quite excellent English, as the gentleman who wrote the silly paragraph we have quoted might have found out by consulting any standard English dictionary, or, more simply, by taking it on trust from the poet Gray.

One of the objects of the Humanitarian League is the abolition of capital punishment. We imagine that it is idle to suppose that the particular kind of crank who patronises the League will be guided by the object-lesson provided by France. The result of the suspension of the death penalty in that country has been an appalling increase in crimes of the most brutal character. Knowing that his precious life was secure, thanks to the energy of the sentimentalist, the gentle *apache* in Paris and other towns has been demonstrating in a most joyous fashion. Such a little joke as robbing a man's house and then playfully tying him to his bed and setting it on fire and leaving him to burn to death has been perpetrated under the benign eye of the beautiful "humanitarian," without in the smallest degree affecting his convictions as to the atrocity of executing murderers. The return of the guillotine, which has now taken place in France, was effected in response to what amounted to a national appeal for protection against every kind of inhuman assassin and ruffian.

It really seems as if at last we are to be allowed a little rest from the nuisance of the Suffragists—at any



rate, they cease to take up their usual quantity of space in the daily papers, whose editors seem at last to be dimly realising that the mere fact that a vulgar and uneducated woman chooses to call herself a Suffragist does not necessarily imply that the public is anxious to read her views set out at length, and her "demands" formulated in its news-organs about four times a week for two or three years. We are glad to read in one of the papers that a party of Suffragists, including various Pankhursts, Pethicks, and other bright specimens of manly womankind, have gone to Geneva, where they are staying at an hotel and indulging in "winter sports" in bob-sleighs decorated with flags bearing the device "Votes for Women." We are sorry for the people of Geneva, and especially for the unfortunate persons who happen to be staying in the same hotel, but it is very gratifying to those who have remained in England. We sincerely hope that these charming ladies will continue to abide in Geneva and drive bob-sleighs decorated with flags. For all practical purposes they will be doing just as much good to their "cause" as if they continued their idiotic antics in London, and they will be giving gratification to a vast host of people at home. In the words of the old song: "They will enjoy themselves and so shall we."

The *Athenæum* will really have to look to itself. Only the other week we had occasion to call attention to the absolute foolishness of a "poem" which Mr. Rendall saw fit to offer his readers. Never before in its history, perhaps, has the *Athenæum* been convicted of publishing verses which were devoid of some sort of literary grace and spiritual meaning. On Saturday last our contemporary published a review of Mr. Wilfrid Meynell's selection from the poems of Francis Thompson. And this is the kind of criticism the review contained:

This volume will serve to bring before a wider circle of readers some of the most individual poetic work of the last century, though, indeed, we hope that "The Hound of Heaven" is known to most lovers of verse. Thompson, however, will not be popular in the sense that Tennyson and Keats and, *longo intervallo*, Kipling are popular. His obscurity, his love of unusual words, his Latinisms, his mysticism, all mark him out as appealing mainly to a special type of mind. This sense is heightened by the themes he chooses, and the lack of narrative and dramatic elements in his work. The ode is his chosen vehicle; and odes are not popular. Perhaps the affinities of his work are beyond the ordinary reader. One must know something of Crashaw in the Caroline period, of Blake in the Georgian, of Coventry Patmore in the Victorian, fully to appreciate his value—although his work is all his own, anything but a *pastiche* of remembered phrases and cadences. Still, there is no doubt that Thompson will have a place of his own in the English Pantheon of poets. What that place will be it is too soon as yet to say, and we shall not attempt to prophesy.

One does not expect a high literary organ to engage in the discussion of poetry from the point of view of popularity. To say (at any rate in the *Athenæum*) that odes are not popular is sheer and inexcusable stupidity. One might expect that sort of "criticism" from the *Daily Mirror*. Then the *Athenæum* quotes at length the most familiar passages from "The Hound of Heaven," with the comment: "Surely nothing could be truer or more broadly human than this." Surely nothing could be less illuminating or more wooden than such a remark. In view of the prevailing lack of taste we can forgive an editor for making a mistake about poetry, but when we find him permitting his contributors to foist off such dullness about a poet like Francis Thompson we can only wonder what has happened to his editorial wits. A strenuous use of the blue pencil would do the *Athenæum* a great deal of good just now.

## THE MAGIC ORCHARD

From the French of HENRI DE REGNIER.

"*Je vis de ma fenêtre ouverte sur le Rêve.*"

My casement to the Dream is open set,  
And in the magic square of that lone place  
A marvellous orchard, lush and dewy-wet,  
Streams in the auroral air, in that faint space  
When the night fails, and morning is not yet.

The wind that stirs the interlacing branches,  
And smooths the glaucous grasses on the lawn,  
Has from the trees, in delicate avalanches,  
The treasure of their liberal blossom torn,  
That glows, or palely blushes, or that blanches.

From the French of CHARLES-AUGUSTIN SAINTE-BEUVE.

Last night I watched in my dark bed, and there  
My silent spirit grew from more to more;  
Till, with a sudden foot spurning Heaven's floor  
The lightning like a courser with bright hair  
Flashed past, and thunder rattled in the air,  
Drawn like a car behind. Then earth was stirred,  
And beasts of earth in sacred terror heard  
That sound, and hid them deep within their lair.

But I was fired by the heaven's flame,  
My spirit woke, and every shock of fire  
Tore from my heavy brow the clouds in sunder;  
A part of the great concert I became,  
A greater than the elements; and higher  
Rose God's still voice within me than the thunder.

M. JOURDAIN.

## MR. SHAW'S OBITUARY

It seems that we have a great man in our midst, and that his name is George Bernard Shaw. According to a journalist—we will not name him for the moment—"Mr. Bernard Shaw has thrilled and filled crowds of thinking and thoughtless people with his destructive and constructive theories, and is now, at a ripe age, sitting on a recognised and unassailable critical throne." This obviously is a delightful picture, though the recognised and unassailable critical throne may be a figment of the imagination. It should be observed, too, that, in mercy for all parties, we have omitted to quote our journalist quite accurately; for, in point of fact, he does not say that Mr. Bernard Shaw has thrilled and filled crowds, etc., but that "a man like" Mr. Bernard Shaw has thrilled and filled crowds. Of course, Mr. Chesterton—it is really Mr. Chesterton—means Mr. Bernard Shaw and none other, and we must always strive to discover what Mr. Chesterton means, and not content ourselves merely with what he says. "A man like Mr. Bernard Shaw" is probably not to be found in the wide, wide world, not to mention "Queechy," and on the whole we are disposed to thank our lucky stars for it. A man like Mr. Bernard Shaw sitting on a recognised and unassailable critical throne would mean pretty much the same thing for common sense and reasonable living as a man like our old friend the Maori sitting on the ruins of London Bridge would mean for the metropolis. But Mr. Chesterton is not content with the recognised and unassailable throne of criticism. He goes on to tell us some of the truth.

For example, he assures us that if Mr. Shaw "appears for an instant in a daily paper, he always appears as a juvenile and impertinent guttersnipe, saying smart things that no one can understand." We concur most heartily; what is more we agree, and whisper, "Exactly so." And then, of course, Mr. Chesterton pulls us up very short indeed. "Some day," he continues "[Mr. Shaw] will die, and we shall have a cataract of newspaper columns telling an astonished public for the first time that he was a great sociologist, an original philosopher, and one of the pillars of the nineteenth century. In other words, "Mr. Bernard Shaw will suddenly become a classic when he has ceased to be an influence." Mr. Chesterton it is who says so, consequently let no dog bark. At the same time, we can tell Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Shaw exactly what will happen when Mr. Shaw dies, a catastrophe which we hope is still far distant. There will be notices in the daily and weekly prints; there will be the usual and very proper expressions of regret, but there will be no cataracts, and there will certainly be no foolishness as to sociology, philosophy, or pillar-furnishing for the nineteenth century. We could write Mr. Shaw's obituary notice with a degree of niceness and finish which would probably be very astonishing to Mr. Chesterton, and very consoling to Mr. Shaw. If ever there was a creature of an hour, a whimsical, naughty, and rather pushing and impertinent creature of an hour, that creature is Mr. George Bernard Shaw. He is one of those men who, without being great or distinguished or wise, or, for that matter, over-brainy, has taken the measure of a small and impressionable section of the world, and made himself appear to be master of it, whereas in reality he is not its master at all, but merely its grinning and subservient slave. The hackneyed phrase about the triton and the minnows exactly suits Mr. Shaw's case. We will suppose that he believes himself to be a person of great literary parts. It is obvious that a person possessed of such a faith would, in the ordinary course of human affairs, be aware that he was not the first human being who had possessed such parts. Shakespeare, for example, had the advantage of being born before Mr. Shaw. The ordinary literary man who remembers Shakespeare assesses his own parts accordingly. Not so Mr. Shaw. For him, Shakespeare and the rest of them have no public existence. If you say Shakespeare to him publicly, he has the wag's retort for ever on his lips. "Shakespeare is dead, my good fellow; Shaw is alive. Shaw is better than Shakespeare." The good-natured guffaw, and are inclined to the opinion that there must be some soul of genius in a chap who has the cheek to talk like that. Having learnt to read, of course, Mr. Shaw knows in his private heart that Shakespeare could have put all Shaw into the little finger of his left-hand glove without feeling him. But publicly, so long as the hapenny papers exist, Shaw is expected to be waggish in the matter of Shakespeare, and waggish he must be. On questions of "sociology" and "philosophy" the same method must be Mr. Shaw's method. "Marriage," says Mr. Shaw publicly, "is all my eye and Peggy Martin." There have been sociologists before Mr. Shaw who took another view, but these poor devils are dead, and Shaw is alive, and what he does not know about marriage is not worth talking about. As to philosophy, all the philosophers are dead, save and except Shaw—and perhaps Chesterton. Chesterton says that Shaw is a philosopher; Shaw has always had a sort of idea that he might be—and there you are. Then there is politics. The *Observer* newspaper suddenly concluded, at the suggestion of a handful of obscure persons who call themselves the Fabian Society, that Mr. Shaw might conceivably be a statesman, and the *Observer* sent round a gentleman with a sweet smile and a fountain pen to enquire and demand of Mr. Shaw, "Are you a

statesman?" Shaw dare not say that he wasn't, and consequently he said firmly and without flinching, "I am." And, of course, it must be so. It is not for us to doubt Mr. Shaw, particularly when he happens to be backed up by Mr. Chesterton. Unfortunately the statesmanship of Mr. Shaw has been studiously buried alive by the London Press. "The London Press," says Shaw, "have consistently ignored my political speeches, although [mark you] they readily printed any reference to Shakespeare, which, uttered as serious criticism, became transformed somehow into gross and ill-mannered stupidity." Here we get it both ways. The London Press has at length taken notice of Mr. Shaw the politician, and Mr. Shaw the politician opens his private heart as to his public utterances with respect to Shakespeare. And in the true spirit of the agile Mr. Shaw would have us believe that he does not complain against the London Press for not recognising his high gifts of statesmanship, but that he does complain of the readiness with which the London Press printed his stupid and ill-mannered references to Shakespeare. In point of fact, so far from complaining as to the suppression of his political views, Mr. Shaw considers that such suppression has rendered "the greatest possible service to the Fabian Society." We can well believe it, but we do not believe it in the same way that Mr. Shaw believes it, for he says, "Thanks to this suppression, our operations are never discovered by the enemy until we have carried them on for twenty years, by which time opposition to us is hopeless." Here, of course, you have more waggery with a good spicing of bunkum. The general mass of reasonable mankind has not heard of Mr. Shaw and is not likely to hear of him, even when he is dead. He is neither a man of letters in the large sense nor a philosopher, and his sociology amounts to his own particular brand of cheap Socialism. He has written a play or two, and he has made a few silly speeches. Because he happens to have more wits than the average Socialist, the Socialists and their hangers-on, not forgetting Mr. Chesterton, consider him a huge man, and eye him with pretty much the same eye that a fly might have for a football. If the hapenny papers and the Fabian Society were to disappear tomorrow Mr. Shaw and all his works would go with them. When he dies there will be an end of him, and as he is a fairly vigorous person, and may happily live for quite a number of years, we should not be at all surprised if he outlived the gimcrack reputation which he has managed to make for himself. Mr. Chesterton compares him with Darwin. For our own part we should liken him to a sort of literary and sociological Mrs. Pankhurst.

## ARCHER AND HANKIN

It appears that Mr. William Archer is the dramatic critic of the *Nation*. And it appears that he has lately had something unpleasant to say of a play by Mr. Hankin. We have not seen Mr. Hankin's play, and we do not propose to see it, but out of a correspondence which has arisen on the subject between Mr. Archer and a person who signs himself "Old Playgoer" we may extract matter. It is not unfair to Mr. Archer that he should be described as a somewhat heavy critic. Among the journalists of his time he figures as a person of reputation in his line, whom no professional person reads. If our recollection serves us, he has written many articles in the *World*, all of them about the drama; and he has written also on the same affair in the *Tribune*, now happily defunct, and, as we have seen, he is still engaged on the *Nation*, which may live for ever. For ourselves, we have tried to peruse his criticisms, but with the best will in the world we have never been able to get along with them.



Mr. Archer is a serious man; he conceives the drama as an institution of importance, and he looks on the theatre as a sort of temple of Art and Grace and Beauty, which, on the whole, is rather old-fashioned of him. Once on a time he stood for Ibsen, and it may be that he now stands for Maeterlinck or for Mr. George Bernard Shaw. But nobody is a penny the better, and certainly nobody is a penny the worse. We consider that this is a pity, because the serious man is a very serious business to himself, and if the world will not take him seriously so much the worse for the world. The fact is that throughout his brilliant career Mr. Archer would appear to have made the blind worm's mistake. With the modern drama and the modern theatre a serious person should really have nothing to do; inasmuch as neither one nor the other can be said to merit serious thought. Herein we have Mr. Archer's stumbling-block. He can never be gay. He goes to the first night of a farce in pretty much the same spirit as an undertaker might go to measure the corpse of a pauper. He knows what ought to be, and what possibly might be, but isn't, and he can be neither happy nor savage about it. So that he prosed and prosed and prosed, and states the old truths and the old dulness, and he is always right and always beaten. The world is not too much with him, but too much for him. We believe that he is a competent critic, and we believe that he can distinguish sound dramaturgic work from the other kind; but there, it seems to us, is the limit of Mr. Archer. Consequently, it gives us the greatest possible pleasure to find him for once in a way coming out of his excellent shell and waving his horns somewhat—like a disturbed snail, or, if we may use the simile without offence, like a fairly angry and sarcastic bull. There can be no doubt in the world that Mr. Archer's treatment of Mr. Hankin's play would be the correct, sound, wise and proper treatment, and that in any case it would represent Mr. Archer's conscientious views, and his true and honest opinions. As we have said, we did not see the play, but we are given to understand that it was a play of the new, old sort, and full of nonsense about a woman and a baby and the stupidity of marriage; and while we have not read Mr. Archer's criticism, we can read it with our mind's eye, as it were, and we can well understand that it would not be altogether gratifying to Mr. Hankin. Naturally, Mr. Hankin, like the next man, is not without his unknown friends and admirers, and one of these, the aforesaid "Old Playgoer" to wit, has written to the *Nation* for the purpose of calling Mr. Archer "a doddering reactionary." It was wicked of "Old Playgoer" to do this, but probably he could not help it, and it was wicked of the editor of the *Nation* to print the letter. For ourselves, however, we are much obliged to "Old Playgoer," not because he is the kind of writer one may applaud, but because he has managed to rouse Mr. Archer. Here are some of Mr. Archer's own words on the subject:

Yes, yes, I am growing old; there is no doubt about it. If by nothing else, I can measure the lapse of time since I was young at criticism by the change—for the better: oh, yes, certainly for the better—in editorial ethics. In my young days, an editor would suffer no one to question the infallibility of his critic. If an exasperated author wrote to the paper (except, perhaps, on the plainest matter of fact) his letter was either quietly wastepaper-basketed, or forwarded to the critic, that he might store it up and "have his knife in" the audacious dramatist at the next opportunity. Quite seriously, this was a barbarous state of things; and again and again, in those far-off days, I urged its reformation. There is no reason why critics should affect to be infallible; and there is every reason why an injured, or merely irritated, author should be suffered to have his say—if his friends cannot keep writing materials out of his reach. So far, I applaud the humane impartiality of the modern editor. But I do not quite see what

dictate of humanity or maxim of policy compels an editor to inform the world, on the authority of an anonymous "Old Playgoer," that his critic is a doddering reactionary, blind to the abounding merits of "our latest drama." When I noted in the contents of last week's *Nation* a letter on "Mr. Archer's Criticism" by an "Old Playgoer," "Aha!" thought I, "here is some generous champion come forward to defend me from the merciless onslaught of Mr. St. John Hankin. Now for some balm to my wounded spirit!" But when I turned to the page—oh, dire disappointment! oh, cruel deception!—the "Old Playgoer" merely rubbed brine into my sores. He thought, indeed, that Mr. Hankin had gone a little too far in calling me a rat: rather because "our latest drama" is by no means a sinking ship, than on account of any fundamental inaptness in the simile. But otherwise he vowed that I richly deserved every stroke of my castigation. To the Young Playwright's whip, in fact, the "Old Playgoer" did his best to add scorpions.

Apart from all considerations of argument, who in the name of goodness would have imagined that Mr. William Archer could write in this sprightly and juvenile fashion? It will be a revelation to his friends, and it will most certainly give his enemies pause—that is to say, of course, if he happens to have any. It is desirable, however, for us to note that at the foot of Mr. Archer's letter, Mr. Massingham remarks: "We have not allowed anybody to call Mr. Archer 'a doddering reactionary.'" This, again, is rather a pity, because it spoils the sport. On the other hand, it is better so. As to the general question of an editor permitting angry authors or their friends to attack his accredited critic, we are sorry we cannot agree with Mr. Archer. If people wish to attack the critic, say, of the *Times* newspaper, they should not be permitted to do it in the *Times*; and we certainly consider that Mr. Archer was not quite so serious as he should have been when he urged such a piece of reformation as that involved. The infallibility of any newspaper's critic must be taken for granted by its editor, and authors who write with the intention of proving that the critic does not know his business should be advised to take their animadversions elsewhere. Otherwise, the average journal would soon resolve itself into a mere Donnybrook or bear garden. There is all the difference in the world between a letter of complaint or defence as to criticism and a letter in which the critic is attacked on the grounds of incompetency, stupidity, or bias. Mr. Archer cannot have said much that could not be justified or that was not proper to be said in the matter of Mr. Hankin's play. Critics like Mr. Archer seldom, or never, make mistakes as to certain broad questions. If they do make mistakes, the author concerned has a clear right of correction and a clear reason for complaint; but he has no right and no reason to charge the critic with incompetence, or to indite him generally as a false and bad critic. The letter from which we have quoted is a lengthy letter, and it consists for the most part of a defence, or, at any rate, an explanation of Mr. Archer's attitude towards the modern drama. We do not consider it seemly that the critic of any respectable review should be compelled by the actions of his editor so to defend himself. Mr. Massingham must know perfectly well that Mr. Archer is a safe critic, if not a merry one; and we consider that his note as to not having permitted anybody to call Mr. Archer "a doddering reactionary" is altogether an inadequate note, and that it is discreditable to the *Nation* thus to throw its critic overboard. Mr. Archer's defence of himself is complete, and it turns the tables on the enemy in a manner which they are little likely to relish. We are glad to see that our old friend has in him a Roland for every Oliver, and we trust that if Mr. Massingham finds himself unequal to take up the cudgels for Mr. Archer, he will at least have the decency to let the last word be Archer's word, and to mark under it, "This correspondence must now cease." An Englishman's

house is his castle, and an English critic's paper should be his strong defence and sure rock in time of trouble. Justice is the finest thing in the world, but we question very much whether it can ever be just to permit your own critic to be reproved over the mouth with a brick in his own column. An editor's proper way with a critic is first of all to have confidence in him, and to stand or fall by that confidence as long as he may, and when he ceases to have confidence in him and finds himself unable to support or defend him, it is better that he should discharge him than that he should allow him to be held up to the sport and contumely of the world at large. Mr. Hankin's part in the matter does not appear to have been at all terrible, and as for "Old Playgoer," we can only hope that Mr. Massingham has his name and address and believes him to be a more trustworthy judge of the drama than Mr. Archer. We may note further that in another journal, which shall be nameless, we observe an editorial disposition to permit fancy bouts between contributors. We do not know whether Mr. Archer would now advocate this kind of thing, but in any case it is certain that such proceedings inevitably result in bad blood and worse journalism. Birds in their little nests should agree, and even if they must fight it is not creditable for the parent or master bird to egg them on. "Quarrel with the children in the next house and never among yourselves," is an old principle of the nursery. And when all is said, ninety-nine journalists out of a hundred would appear to be fairly quarrelsome children.

## WHITELEY'S AT THE COMEDY

It seems but yesterday that the cheap newspapers were bragging on behalf of Mr. Somerset Maugham that he had a play "running" at practically every theatre in London. We do not know that there is any particular harm in sheer fecundity or in the capacity to toss into the public maw repeated doses of something which the public maw appears to relish. That such gifts should be held up before one as plain proof of an author's intellectual merit, however, is, of course, preposterous. At the time of Mr. Maugham's control of the London stage—that is to say, when he was at the height of his boom—we did not trouble ourselves to visit his multifarious exhibitions. So that we are in no position to speak of the excellence of his general achievements. But in consequence of the fact that his sundry tremendous works would appear, after the usual "extraordinary successes," to remain no longer in the metropolitan dramatic bill of fare, we have been round to see *Penelope*, which, if we are to believe the daily press, is a very fine example of Mr. Maugham's "art," and which we shall presume represents him in a mature, ripe and finished vein. We sat through the whole of the three acts, though the play really ends in act two, and we came away with the conclusion that *Penelope* is prettily named; that Mr. Maugham is most fortunate in having Miss Marie Tempest for his leading lady, and that, on the whole, *Penelope* is exactly the kind of play which one might expect to be supplied by Whiteley's. Messrs. Whiteley, we believe, will forgive us if we say that they are "universal providers," and that if you put them to it they could bring to your door, as it were, anything in this world that you may require, from a pocket handkerchief to a middling-sized elephant. They conduct their business on very smart lines; they know their public; they do not profess to concern themselves over closely with strict art or, still less, with affairs of the intellect, and their desire is to please and satisfy all comers. Mr. Maugham—and we say it to his credit—is imbued with the Whiteley spirit. In *Penelope* he has put up a smart business-like

play, concerned with the simple domestic passions of love and jealousy; he gives us a number of figures of the sort which are known to be thought "real" in Westbourne Grove, and the wit, humour and pathos of him are nicely calculated to meet the very proper emotional requirements of Sloane Square and South Kensington. *Penelope* herself is intended to captivate the middle-class woman. She is a trim, pert, and rather passionate matron of five years' standing. There is no nonsense about her, and she loves her husband, who happens to be a rising young physician, not to say a good deal of a bounder. In this excellent little lady, as represented by Miss Marie Tempest, and in this slack and graceless, rising young physician, the femininity of South Kensington will see the sexes painted as they should be painted—the woman a confiding and affectionate bundle of pretty clothes and pretty ways, possessed, however, of a good deal of the nous of the courtesan; and the man a blundering, but nevertheless artful and untruthful jackass. For the rest, there is a gentleman who boasts continually of his acquaintance with duchesses; there is *Penelope's* father, whom we are requested to accept for a mathematician, and who is really a dodderer; and there is *Penelope's* mother, whom we may dismiss as the usual flustered, middle-aged female. These people are of no real concern to the play, and Mr. Maugham has really roughed them in because the people in the stalls would not have been satisfied without them. Practically the only person who matters, after *Penelope* and her husband, is the wicked married lady who tangles up the husband of *Penelope*. With these three characters Mr. Maugham might have made out of *Penelope* a passable, light, one-act piece, suitable for performance as a curtain-raiser. For very obvious reasons, however, he has preferred to squeeze the play into three acts. And as he does not possess the intellectual equipment, which is necessary to excusable or brilliant padding, *Penelope* is an artistic disappointment. Perhaps the best that can be said of it is that it is trite comedy served up in a manner which savours of the farce. There is nothing new about it, nothing witty, and nothing moving. At times and in places the author displays a certain admirable intention, but one feels that on the whole he botches his own chances. It is Miss Marie Tempest who saves the situations all the time. In point of fact, while she appears to be one and the same *Penelope* from first to last, she is really compelled to be quite half a dozen different women through Mr. Maugham's failure in the matters of coherence and clarity of conception. And as for minor blemishes, they may be said to abound. For example, it is a little foolish of Mr. Maugham to make *Penelope* sigh for "something with boiling oil in it" when she is imagining tortures for her rival. Sir William Gilbert is the registered proprietor of this poor witticism, and one is astonished to find it raising giggles in the new century. But the boiling oil touch, and another which bears reference to a rooster's "run for his money," are the only verbal points with which Mr. Maugham manages to secure palpable hits. And the rooster joke is unfair, because it is a joke for the ribald. Then again, Mr. Maugham brings into his doctor's consulting-room two patients who are introduced for the mere, sheer and obvious purpose of passing the time. It is not even pretended, as in the case of *Penelope's* father, mother and uncle, that they have anything to do with the story. Consequently they are unnecessary, superfluous, and, strictly speaking, they have no business in the play. We have already said that the third act is also superfluous, and particularly so, as it is full of anti-climax. The good qualities of *Penelope* are that it is brisk and pretty to look at, and that a great many of the situations are amusing. The play also has the advantage of reasonable propriety of tone, and it is not preachy on the one hand or contemptuous of the conventions on



the other. For the male section of an audience there may be considerable suggestions of twaddle about it. For young women, however, it is probably all wrong, because no woman in her senses will agree that the best way to cure a husband of an infatuation for somebody not herself is to "give him his head." Neither is it good for young women that wifely tenderness should be proclaimed from the house-tops to be much the same thing as strawberry ice; which statement, of course, will be appreciated by persons who have no sense of humour. The fact is that *Penelope* as a whole is a poor play because there is no human blood in it. It is make-believe, and cheap, and in the main hackneyed make-believe, for which reason possibly it will bring "good business" to the box-offices. For Mr. Maugham we have one other word. Let him fore-swear universal providing. He has a sense for the stage, and he has a sense of the comic. It may be that, in spite of his apparent facility, he is really a toiler. If this be not so we should advise him to toil, and if it be so we should still advise him to toil after larger and ampler things. We do not think that Mr. Maugham could ever write a play which would be worth reading in the literary sense, but we imagine that he could do better than *Penelope*, not only in the literary sense, but also in the dramatic sense, if he were to take the necessary trouble.

## JANUARY

THERE is little use in asserting, as do some worthy people, that the passing of the Old Year and the first few moments of the New Year bring no change—that their celebration is merely an arbitrary arrangement of man's devising, and that, in short, "nothing happens." Time, greedily clutching at the final sheet of our annual record, and doling out a fair white page for our consideration, cannot help a muttered word of caution that we be less hasty in our writing, more stringent on the subject of blots and smears; and for the life of us we cannot avoid a little thrill of dismay or pleasure, as the case may be, when we realise the position. For here, we think comfortably, we have a fresh chance; our good ship has found once more the bearings of those Fortunate Islands whose shores we have so often sighted mistily, far away on the horizon; we captains will make sure this time that chart and compass are correct, that the sextant and chronometer work harmoniously together, and that the engines are sound and speedy. What hurricanes may come, what shoals or rocks or stubborn currents may threaten, what siren voices may charm us from our true course, we heed but little. And if sun and stars are veiled, we will steer, we say, by dead-reckoning; but, alas! dependence upon that method of navigation often brings us to grief; on that point our past log-books will not bear too close or prolonged examination.

We are, as a rule, inclined to be optimists during the first month of the year, in spite of the wintry hours and sullen skies which it so frequently brings:

Each year bears something from us as it flies,  
We only blow it farther with our sighs,

sings Walter Savage Landor; and our chief regrets are reserved for the months when the year is on the wane. The harshness of January is beneficent, without doubt; man's power of appreciation is trained by contrasts, and we look forward to the lessening keenness of the winds, the first fine green flush of the woods, the spreading flame of buttercups through the level meadows, with a heartier welcoming thrill for the meagre joys of the present. Country folk in more lands than one do not care to find genial weather too early in the year: "*Mieux vaut voir un chien enragé*

*qu'un soleil chaud en Janvier*," runs a French proverb; and we have rendered the same idea into a jingling couplet which varies for different counties:

If the grass grows in Janiweer,  
It grows the worse for't all the year.

But January is often under-rated. It has its pleasant side, in spite of the season. The "in-between time," we might term it, when the first scanty efflorescence of the coming month—the venturesome primrose, peering forth in a dell of sunshine out of the wind, the sheltered wood-violet, the kingly daffodil, the pale bells of the snowdrop—has not yet begun; the period of suspense, of expectation, of joys enfolded and beauties withheld. On many of the trees the sticky leaf-buds show plainly, only waiting for the encouragement of warmer sunshine to uncurl their dainty spirals to the light. It is the month when the word signalled from the clouds seems to be indistinct, yet of a cheerful burden; the month of patience, of hope, of faith—"the evidence of things not seen." Daybreak and sunset may be wild and grey, or may illumine and encrimson coldly the wastes of snow, blur with dusky colour the sombre vistas of the city streets, but there prevails a sense of something beyond, something that is worthy of the waiting; we are conscious that the flower of the year is opening, not closing, and a certain heartiness of thought is ours thereby. "Every dull mood of nature has its compensations to shame us out of peevishness." "After a still winter night," writes Thoreau from his lonely hut, "I awoke with the impression that some question had been put to me which I had been endeavouring in vain to answer in my sleep, as what—how—when—where? But there was dawning Nature, in whom all creatures live, looking in at my broad windows with serene and satisfied face, and no question on her lips. I awoke to an answered question, to Nature and daylight. The snow lying deep on the earth, dotted with young pines, and the very slope of the hill on which my house is placed, seemed to say 'Forward!' Nature puts no question, and answers none which we mortals ask. She has long ago taken her resolution. . . . Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads." Still, it is well to look upwards, for the lark is often the only creature visibly undiscouraged by the impassive canopy of cloud which our English January so frequently refuses to furl. Mounting, as though in search of the sapphire vault beyond, he sings:

He rises, scarcely seen against the gloom,  
Spills his full heart in crystal drops of song  
That mingle falling to a slender stream  
Of fairy music; then, all silently,  
Descends forlorn athwart the darkening sky.

A brave, bonnie little bird is he—the clearer and the dearer for the silence amid which he sings.

And herein lies the beauty of the January landscape for those who see with the spiritual eye as well as with outward vision—the song of joyous waiting, set to music by the lark's high notes, is written there. The heather on the cliffs is dry, rattling in the salt sea breeze; the twisted hawthorn is "carved clean to the way of the wind"; the river is livid and moaning, as though chained by regretful dreams; but the frailty and the barrenness is not that of November; it is suggestive; it is on the side of increase, not of decay. We may become pessimists toward the end of the year, with a surly shrug for the memories of what we meant to do; but ungrateful and perverse is that man, shouldering his discontented way through the shrill blasts, who does not now open his heart to that inspiring word "Faith!" For in the Summer he will have realised no splendid anticipations—he will be bankrupt of the bounty of the gods.

## THE WAY OF THE WORLD

WE print the following for what it is worth:

### LUCY'D HISTORY.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—The subjoined correspondence between Mr. H. W. Lucy and myself refers to that travesty of historical fact which he has contributed to the current *Cornhill*, and to which I drew attention in the *Standard* of the 7th inst.

I may explain that on the 1st inst., Mr. Lucy, in the course of an article in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, entitled, "Romance of the House of Commons," made the grotesquely erroneous assertion that Disraeli "entered it (the House) as an impecunious Radical." On the 6th I contributed to that paper a correction of this blunder (so characteristic of its author), and referred to, without specifying, that triumph of misrepresentation which I exposed in the *Standard* on the following day.

As you will see, I accepted Mr. Lucy's challenge at once: I am still awaiting his reply. His prolonged silence suggests that he recognises discretion to be the better part of valour, and that as THE ACADEMY of last Saturday plainly puts it, "the situation is a little awkward for" him. Surely there is only one course for Mr. Lucy to adopt. Better late than never. Had he been endowed with a keener sense of the responsibilities of a "public writer," and of the rudimentary ethics of literary veracity, he would have adopted that course twenty years ago, when it was brought to his notice that he had attributed to Mr. Gladstone a statement which Mr. Gladstone did not make, and which reflected discredit on the Conservative Whips of 1841, one of whom was, in 1889, already dead, and the other a nonagenarian who passed away in the following year.

Mr. Lucy is the master of an attractive style, but I trust that his many readers will henceforth temper their admiration of his narrative powers (in which I cordially concur) with a healthy scepticism as to the facts of what may appropriately be styled, in this connection, "Lucy'd History."

Constitutional Club, London.

ALFRED B. BEAVEN.

Jan. 14th, 1909.

Whitethorn, Hythe, Kent.

8th January, 1909.

SIR,—I have received a copy of the *Liverpool Daily Post* containing a letter from you in which you say: "Mr. Lucy has in the *Cornhill* reproduced an oft- (by him) repeated story on the authority of Mr. Gladstone, although Mr. Gladstone has repudiated it, and his repudiation had been communicated to Mr. Lucy years ago to my knowledge."

This is a serious charge to bring against a public writer. I must ask you to particularise the story you allude to, and to cite the authority for the alleged repudiation.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY W. LUCY.

Greyfriars, Leamington,

January 9th, 1909.

DEAR SIR,—The enclosed correspondence, which was published in the *Standard* of Thursday last, will, I hope, be sufficient reply to your challenge to me to substantiate what you rightly characterise as "a serious charge to bring against a public writer."

I need only add that I forwarded to you a copy of Mr. Gladstone's postcard (marked II. in the enclosed cutting), together with either a verbatim copy or an abstract of the letter to which it was a reply; that you acknowledged its receipt, and that in the course of further correspondence you admitted that your version of Mr. Gladstone's anecdote was in error in the very material point to which I drew attention. Nevertheless, so far from complying with my reasonable request to take the earliest opportunity of correcting your error through the same channels by which you had secured its wide dissemination, you have reproduced it on several occasions since 1889, the last being in the current *Cornhill*.

I may remark in passing that my letter in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, to which I am indebted for the honour of your communication, deals with another illustration of the tendency of your facile, but very inaccurate, pen to libel the memory of the dead.

Yours very faithfully,

ALFRED B. BEAVEN.

We do not quite see what possible defence Mr. Lucy can set up; and it appears to us his proper course would be frankly to admit his error and to promise amendment. Silence is all very well in its way, but it ceases to be golden, and, indeed, puts on much of the appearance of brass, when matters of this nature are concerned. Of course, it may be that Mr. Lucy is out of town or otherwise prevented from replying to Mr. Beaven's letter. If this be so we must reserve judgment.

Last week's issue of the *Nation* contained a poem by Mr. William H. Davies, whose recently-published booklet, "Nature Poems," has already been noticed in these columns. We take the liberty of reprinting some of the verses:

Though I do love to feel the Rain,  
And be by winds well blown,  
The mystery of mortal life  
Doth press me down.

And, in this mood, come now what will,  
Shine Rainbow, Cuckoo call—  
There is no thing in Heaven or Earth  
Can lift my soul.

\* \* \*

I sit between two fair Rose-trees;  
Red roses on my right  
And, on my left side, roses are  
A lovely white.

The little birds are full of joy,  
Lambs bleating all the day;  
The colt runs after the old mare,  
And children play.

And still there comes this dark, dark hour—  
Which is not born of care;  
Into my heart it creeps before  
I am aware.

The *Nation* is fortunate. Mr. Davies may be reckoned a "natural born" poet. Though he may lack the erudition of the schools and consequent powers of self-criticism there can be no question as to his authentic parts. At times he comes very near Blake himself.

The irrepressible Lady Grove has been reviewing a book for the *Daily Chronicle*. The title of the book is "The Making of a Successful Husband." The *Chronicle*, however, prints Lady Grove's review in the next column to its priceless political leaders under the head of "The Making of a Husband. By Lady Grove." We are inclined to think that, on the whole, Lady Grove would have amused us much more considerably if her "article" were indeed an article, as it purports typographically to be, and not a mere review, as it really is. However, we must put up with small mercies. "It is not extraneous advice," says Lady Grove, "however admirable, that will ensure wedded bliss, but the characters of the contracting parties as they develop," which, on the whole, is a somewhat cryptic utterance. We should have imagined that from Lady Grove's point of view the handiest way to "make" a husband would be to steal his vote, or at any rate to neutralise it by getting a vote for yourself. Development of character would ensue of necessity. Our own opinion is that husbands are born, not made—and so are wives. Why a woman who wants the vote so badly as Lady Grove would appear to want it should be considered an expert on husband-making, even by the *Daily Chronicle*, will pass the average comprehension.

The fact is that Lady Grove should not be allowed to discuss the state of matrimony at all. Here is a good



sample of her tender, critical method in dealing with matters of the heart:

Much consolatory counsel is given as to the advisability of perfect confidence between husband and wife, and to emphasise this point the father relates a touching tale of a young friend of his who had kept his worries a secret from his wife, whose discerning eyes had nevertheless perceived that something was amiss. At last, however, he faced the music like a little man. What do you suppose that woman did when he told her? Did she have a fit? No, sir. She threw her arms around his neck, and cried, "Oh, Johnny, is that all?" He confided later to his friend the fact that his failure had been the greatest success of his life, for it had enabled him to become for the first time really acquainted with his wife. Well, that is possible. But it would be rash to say that the result of this more intimate knowledge would invariably be to enhance the value of either husband or wife in each other's eyes.

Of course, your true Suffragist would have told Johnny very sternly and sharply that he was a fool and a rogue combined, and that he had not in the least enhanced his value in *her* eyes. The enhancing or depreciating of values between married couples may be a philosophical duty from Lady Grove's point of view, but it can be proved out of the book to be an idiotic pursuit and a sure enemy of married happiness, for precisely which reason your Suffragist would advocate it. Among decent married persons questions of value do not arise. If a man's actions or emotions, or a woman's actions or emotions, are to be trimmed with a view to possible enhancements or otherwise of "value in each other's eyes" we might as well shut up shop. "Charity thinketh no evil," and "it suffereth long and is kind." "Votes for women" is another affair.

It seems that Mr. Lloyd George has been giving a dinner party at Cannes, and the "voracious" fashionable reporter has been informed that the guests were Lady McLaren and three Mr. McLarens. His paragraph was set forward with all the pomps and dignities as if the fact that Lady McLaren and her sons had picked a bit of dinner with Mr. Lloyd George was a matter of the highest international importance. Of course, the Lady McLaren in question is the Lady McLaren who believes that chivalry is dead, and that your civil man of the period limits his gallantry to the opening of doors for pretty women. We conclude that Mr. Lloyd George opened the door for Lady McLaren after the banquet, and was not reproved for his chivalry in the matter. When Mr. Asquith dines with Mrs. Catharine Nation there will doubtless be more paragraphs. What will some of us not do for England?

According to one of the Radical literary gossips "Mr. Frank Harris has almost ready for publication a book called 'The Man, William Shakespeare, and His most Tragic Life Story.'" Our gossip omits to mention the name of the publisher who is to issue the book. In point of fact, Mr. Harris has had this work ready for publication for a considerable time past, and we happen ourselves to have read it. Making allowances for certain blemishes which Mr. Harris will by this time no doubt have removed, there can be no question that "The Man, Shakespeare," is about as excellent a piece of writing on the subject as has yet been penned. If the book ever does get published Mr. Sidney Lee and Professor Raleigh will have to look to their laurels. The difference between Mr. Harris and these gentlemen is that Mr. Harris is all for Shakespeare, poet and human man, while Mr. Lee is for Mr. Lee, "historian," and Professor Raleigh is all for Professor Raleigh, "brilliant critic." We have had our differences with Mr. Harris on the matter of his novel, a work of which, in the main, we disapprove; and, furthermore, we should not exactly look to him for sure criticism of poetry. But that he understands

about Shakespeare cannot be doubted, and it is astonishing that "The Man, Shakespeare," should have remained unpublished for so many years. And, talking of Shakespeare, we are reminded of a couple of anecdotes which may or may not be new. A certain critic came across a strolling actor who was sunning himself in the costume of Hamlet outside a fit-up theatre. The critic said: "You're an actor, I perceive." The man replied that, in a sort of way, he was. "Tell me," said the critic, "what is your real opinion of Shakespeare?" "Well," replied the actor with a far-away look, "to tell you the truth, I don't know much about him, but you may bet your hat he was lousily treated." The other story is of a butcher, whose hobby was literature. Somebody enquired of him whether he believed that Bacon wrote Shakespeare. To which the butcher replied: "It is not for me to say, sir, but I consider that if Bacon didn't write Shakespeare he missed the finest chance he ever had in his life." Which is the plain unvarnished truth.

The *Outlook* continues sedulously to make its appearance without poetry. We are flattered to find that the editor recognises the wisdom of our advice on the subject. It is nothing to his discredit that he cannot obtain good verse, but it would be greatly to his discredit if, after our warning, he should continue to deal in the meretricious. The *Saturday Review* is also poemless, and so, thank heaven, is the *Athenæum*, the which journal, after the "tousy tyke" on "The Wasp," and Mr. Bernard Capes on "Will o' the Wisp," might really be excused if it never printed poetry again. It is wonderful what a little wise suggestion can accomplish in this naughty world. At the same time, we cannot in the least rejoice at the poemless condition of our three noble contemporaries; for whether the political economists like it or not, it is a fact that when a nation is not making poetry it may anticipate trouble. The day before yesterday we saw in the *Daily Mail* a column article by Mr. Laurence Binyon. We rubbed our eyes, but there it was, a whole column of flat prose about the British Museum, with the legend, "By Laurence Binyon" printed gloriously upon the top of it. Price, no doubt, three guineas. We believe that in the time occupied by Mr. Binyon in the composition of this article he could have forced himself to produce some sort of a poem which might have helped Mr. Hodge, of the *Saturday*, or Mr. Rendall, of the *Athenæum*, or Mr.—shall we say Binks?—of the *Outlook*. But there might not have been three guineas tied to the proof. Of course, it goes without saying that Mr. Binyon and all other poets, considered in their capacities as citizens, have a perfect right to churn out prose for the *Daily Mail* and leave the literary papers without so much as a jingle, if they can find it in their hearts to do so. But the muses must weep to see it, and even we, who are not by any means the muses, are filled with pain at the sight of it. A Bishop writing in *Comic Cuts* would be an offence to everybody who has a thought for the Church. Poets perpetrating "articles of interest" in hapenny papers appear to us to be just as unbeautiful. At the same time, we may be wrong.

As we go to press we receive the appended letter from the Editor of the *Spectator*:

DEAR SIR,—I am informed that THE ACADEMY of January 9th, p. 652, contained the following statement:—

Mr. Bottomley is either a rich man or he is not. If he is rich he should pay his own way. If he is not, what becomes of the prospectus of *John Bull*, for particulars of which please see the *Saturday Review* and the *Spectator* of a few weeks ago?

If you had taken the trouble to verify this statement as regards the *Spectator*, you would have found that it was not true. The *Spectator* did not contain the prospectus of *John Bull* or any advertisement of that paper. Such advertisement

was offered to the *Spectator* but was refused. I beg that you will print this letter in your paper.

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully,

J. ST. LOE STRACHEY,

Editor and Proprietor.

The Editor of THE ACADEMY.

We regret extremely that we should have misrepresented the *Spectator*, and we offer Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey and his paper our sincere apologies for the inadvertence. In point of fact, when the advertisement was offered to us we enquired if it was being accepted by the other weekly reviews, and we were informed that it was. However, that is no argument in face of the facts, and we are most sorry that we took for granted an assurance respecting which we should have enquired more closely. We asked the *Saturday Review* over the telephone if they were taking the advertisement, and they replied that they were. Our omission to take the same precaution in the case of the *Spectator* was unfortunate, and we do not attempt to excuse ourselves for it.

In another column we print a letter with reference to the discrepancies between the facsimile of Rossetti's fair copy of "The Ballad of Jan Van Hunks" and the typographical version of it, both of which appear in the *English Review*. It is evident, as our correspondent points out, that somebody has been at pains to edit Rossetti. Whether the editor is Mr. Watts-Dunton or Mr. Hueffer we have no means of knowing, though we should imagine that the probabilities are in favour of Mr. Watts-Dunton. And the position of affairs, as pointed out by our correspondent, will serve to emphasise our view that, broadly speaking, the publication of inedited poems by eminent hands is a risky and ill-advised business. If Rossetti had considered "The Ballad of Jan Van Hunks" worthy of a poet of his reputation it seems to us that he would have published it himself and obtained for it such reward as might be forthcoming. The only real excuses for publication twenty-six years after his death are:

1. That it will help the sales of the *English Review*.

2. That it has brought grist to the mill of Mr. Watts-Dunton.

The sacrifice of Rossetti for such purposes may not be a very serious affair, but we do not think the poet himself would have relished it. And as for the corrections, if we know anything about Dante Gabriel Rossetti at all, they would have driven him into something of a fury. It is all very well for a dying poet to hand small manuscripts to his friends for keepsakes, but when those friends take it upon themselves to edit and publish them as serious examples of a poet's art they travel into a region where friendship becomes a doubtful quantity. Perhaps Mr. Watts-Dunton will favour the town with the explanation which seems to be due from him.

## REVIEWS

### NOYES ABOUT MORRIS

*William Morris.* By ALFRED NOYES. (Macmillan, English Men of Letters Series. 2s. 6d.)

WE suppose that the commissioning of a poet to write the life of a poet is a natural and proper literary affair; and that in practice it works out pretty much on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief. The which adage, of course, we quote without making the smallest reflection on Mr. Noyes or the late William Morris. At the same time, it seems to us that it is not always a poet of Mr. Noyes's sort who should be requisitioned for the duties of critical biographer of a poet of Morris's sort. We have hopes of Mr. Noyes as poet, pure and simple; because, taking him all round,

he has been bold to fly and not too careful of his shins. We should have considered that after "Drake" he would have betaken himself to some expansive waste of tableland and done his best to soar once again, this time, perhaps, without the assistance of Patriotism and the stage carpenters. But alas for the vanity of critical hopes. Mr. Noyes has been "approached"—no doubt with the best and most liberal intentions—by Messrs. Macmillan, and he leaves his flying machine on Horeb, or upon a peak at Shepherd's Bush, or wherever he keeps it, and comes patiently and meritoriously down to plain book-writing about William Morris. It is obvious that the writing of even a short life of Morris must have occupied a good deal of Mr. Noyes's time and thoughts for, at any rate, quite a fortnight. It is obvious also that, while we are really not concerned in the matter, even a fortnight snatched holus bolus out of the fervid leisure of a rampant, cloud-compelling poet may be a serious loss to poetry. It is not so much the frantic fortnight as the frame of mind which is bound to result. Between the writing of epics and the plodding along with biographies there is all the difference between running for the Derby and carting stones. In this precious fortnight Mr. Noyes may conceivably and unwittingly have foregone the opportunity of his life. When the heavenly muses knock at a man's door nowadays he should take particularly good care to be at home and not otherwise engaged. The heavenly muses are hard mistresses, and jealous. Persons with other business to attend to can scarcely hope for a proper continuance of their favours. Besides which the bare routine of raking up the facts about a man's life and the dull duty of perusing, often against one's will, his frequently overpraised writings is a task which may prove most harmful to a poet's tender and susceptible intellectuality. However, Mr. Noyes has seen fit to accept Messrs. Macmillan's commission, and we must take it for granted that the heavenly muses know how to take care of themselves, and that Mr. Noyes's deflection will be condoned, or perhaps considered of slight moment. Meanwhile, we must admit "William Morris" into the English Men of Letters Series for what it is worth. One reads Mr. Noyes's pages with a sort of breathlessness; for on the whole they are not so much the pages of a critic or a biographer as of a rhapsodist. Mr. Noyes would appear to have set out to make a Morris of his own rather than to give us an arrangement of the facts. And the consequence is that the biography will make pleasant reading for the persons who admire fancy writing and will, no doubt, be admired by certain of Morris's friends and hangers-on. But as a contribution to a series on the lines of the English Men of Letters Series, it appears to us to be somewhat of a mistake. If we are to believe Mr. Noyes, Morris was at once a lesser man than Tennyson, and a good deal greater. "Morris's debt to Tennyson," we are told "is an immense one; and it does not in the least detract from his greatness or even his originality that this should be so, any more than would the debt of a son to his father. But the fact remains that the man who wrote 'In Memoriam,' the 'Ballad of the Revenge,' the great 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington,' the 'Northern Farmer,' and 'The Princess,' had a range of which Morris was unaware altogether. Writing out of a full-hearted admiration and enthusiasm for the work of Morris, it seems at the outset more than ever necessary for us to emphasise this. No doubt Tennyson wrote some bad poetry; but let us reverse the methods of his critics and take Morris's description of the lady who, having made the acquaintance of Rossetti:

lived in a hall  
Large in the eyes, and slim and tall;  
And ever she sang from noon to noon,  
Two red roses across the moon;



let us compare that description with the solemn swell of Tennyson's majestic 'Morte D'Arthur':

So all the day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,  
King Arthur: *then, because his wound was deep,*  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
*On one side lay the Ocean, and on one*  
*Lay a great water, and the moon was full.*

The august simplicity of passages like that was now and always beyond the reach of Morris, as also was the marvellous resource of the rolling organ-music of Tennyson's verse, exemplified in the sudden glorious change in the rhythmic beat where, indeed, one knows not the speech from the thought, the body from the soul of the poem, so perfectly are they wedded.

The old order changeth, yielding place to new.

And that, of course, is the whole philosophy of the matter. Morris's poetry was of a new order, and very thankful we may be for its advent, lest 'one good custom' should have corrupted the world." This is Mr. Noyes all over. Comparisons are odious at best, but who in his senses would seriously set himself to "compare" chalk and cheese. If Mr. Noyes wishes to be taken for a critic, he must really learn to be a little reasonable. Even the maddest and most pedantic of "literary" examiners would scarcely invite one to "compare" two such passages as those instanced by Mr. Noyes. If he wanted something of Tennyson to collate with the "two red roses across the moon" verses, there was Mariana, not to mention Oriana, lying to his hand. We are not concerned to defend Morris against Tennyson. Tennyson was a poet; Morris was something of a poet and perhaps more of a paper-hanger; so that Mr. Noyes is quite right in his main contention, though it is a contention which did not require to be stated. And having been at great pains to convince us that Tennyson was the better poet, Mr. Noyes finds himself, in a chapter marked "Conclusion," compelled to write as follows:

O hearken the words of his voice of compassion:

"Come cling round about me, ye faithful who sicken  
Of the weary unrest and the world's passing fashion!  
As the rain in mid-morning your troubles shall thicken,  
But surely within you some Godhead doth quicken,  
As ye cry to me heeding, and leading you home."

"What is all this but the gold and frankincense and myrrh of his three kings? In every line that Morris wrote he was helping on earth to build that distant, continuing city whose first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third a chalcedony, the fourth an emerald. There was no preciousness in his choice of the Middle Ages as his 'form and style.' He turned to them as world-weary men turn to their own childhood, knowing perhaps that, except as a little child in glittering armour, he could not enter into his Kingdom of Heaven. His abiding city was not, and never could be, here. His work is suffused with the eternal light of that vision of an ultimately reconciled and ransomed world to which Shelley attained and Keats was climbing when he murmured, 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty!' the vision shadowed forth in sign and symbol by all the prophets of all the ages; the unconquerable and inviolable hope of mankind, that the desert and solitary place shall at last break into singing, and the wilderness blossom as the rose, and sorrow and sighing flee away." Here, of course, we have some of the eloquence of the late Dr. Parker. It is the kind of writing that Mr. Noyes considers beautiful, and he has keyed-up his man Morris to fit charmingly into it; but it

is not criticism, and it is certainly not biography. We do not suppose for a moment that anybody who has read Morris's published writings will have two opinions about Mr. Noyes's assessment of them. Always and inevitably he is too anxious to cry "swans" when there are no swans. Hence it comes to pass that, broadly speaking, whenever he quotes he overpraises, and on occasion he is not above praising downright blemishes. For example, he quotes, with admiration for their craftsmanship, the following stanzas:

Because stout Gareth lets his spear fall low,  
Gauwaine and Launcelot and Dinadan  
Are helm'd and waiting; let the trumpets go!  
Bend over, ladies, to see all you can!

Clench teeth, dames, yea, clasp hands, for Gareth's spear  
Throws Kay from out his saddle, like a stone  
From a castle-window when the foe draws near—  
"Iseult!" Sir Dinadan rolleth overthrown.

Mr. Noyes informs us that when we compare—he will be comparing—a line like

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,

or the way in which Gray maintains the regularity of the metrical beats throughout his "Elegy" with the way in which Morris departs from it in

Clench teeth, dames, yea, clasp hands for Gareth's spear  
Throws Kay, etc.,

it is obvious that Morris "does not err from mere lack of craftsmanship." The fact that he does err, and errs very uncouthly, in the two stanzas instanced, is nothing to Mr. Noyes. We are told that Morris's verses "should be read slowly, almost syllable by syllable, with due regard to their childlike mediæval naïveté," which in itself, however, is an admission that there is something mightily wrong with them. And we are also bidden to infer that when Morris rhymes "ago" and "go," he is really having recourse to "masterly artistic devices." This, need one say, is the old, old trick of the appraiser who prides himself on seeing good in everything. A poet like William Morris gains nothing by such a method of explication. Considered for what he is worth—namely, as a contriver of rather drowsy and superfluous histories in verse, William Morris, poet, is all very well in his way. But Mr. Noyes would find it very difficult to discover to us any line or passage in Morris's poetical writings, which may be properly considered great poetry. Tacitly he admits this much himself, but he will not say so in as many words for fear of giving offence, or it may be for fear of losing faith in the poet for whom he is so anxious to claim wonders. Morris has added nothing to the spiritual currency of poetry. He is not even a poet's poet in the sense that one may rake him for symbols with any proper advantage. Though he appears to be all gold and glitter and frankincense and myrrh and roses, and, if Mr. Noyes will so have it, jasper and chalcedony, there is very little about him that is even decorative. Mr. Noyes believes that it is possible that Morris wrote the "greatest epic of the nineteenth century," which is perhaps not saying much; but who reads, or who is going to read, "Sigurd the Volsung," great epic or otherwise? The fact is that a poet whom nobody reads is, to say the least, in a difficult position, and no amount of praise on the part of other poets will get him out of it. If Mr. Noyes had confessed this much to himself, he would probably not have put quite so much paint on his lily. We note that one of the reviews of Mr. Noyes's "William Morris" says that the book reads like a romance. This is true, with the difference that it reads like an ill-considered romance. Mr. Noyes should get back to his aeroplane.

## LOVE AND A WOMAN

*Love and a Woman.* By CHARLOTTE MANSFIELD. (T. Werner Laurie, 6s.)

IN the first impetuous heat of criticism, after reading this book, we thought the best plan would be to call the heroine a little idiot and have done with it; but, upon consideration, we are forced to conclude that she is quite a presentable person in the way of intellect, only suffering vicariously from the disabilities of the author. The situation which forms the central motive of the story is perplexing, and is dealt with in a perplexing manner. We are asked to believe that Sir Ronald Hartley is a gentleman, honourable and of unstained character, while he loves and wins the love of Eileen, the sweet and simple heroine in whose cheeks "the perfume of the roses deepened" (*sic*); we are even led to infer that it is quite a fine thing for a married man to carry on such an intrigue; that the dishonour would have come had he broken with Eileen; that his wife's flirtations formed some sort of an excuse for amorous reprisals. True, he dies voluntarily at the end of the book, expires gracefully and very lingeringly from a slow, secret poison self-administered, and puts the girl, who comes disguised as a nurse for a final farewell, into the arms of the doctor; and as this medical man is her cousin, in love with her, better morals may prevail later on. But we are compelled to protest against this unskilled resuscitation of a type of novel we had thought played out; it was not worth doing.

We cannot say anything pleasant about the style in which the book is written. The would-be funny paragraph pervades it to an annoying extent:

Eileen was seated next to a young man who had waxed moustaches in lieu of a 'Varsity education, and was considered quite the buck of the boarding-house, because he had engaged from the local stables a nag of uncertain blood to carry him for an hour every morning. His father (*viz.*, Mr. Hugh Watson's father, not the sire of the nag) was something in the North, cotton some said, cutlery others suggested, but already three women of uncertain age and matrimonial yearnings had preened themselves when in his presence.

Pages of that kind of writing become maddening. The composition is poor in the extreme; for lack of good punctuation the sentences limp pitifully:

But the beauty of the morning filled the man with hope, the presence so near of the woman he loved seemed to assure him that hope would not be in vain, but he had promised not to bother her, he would wait.

... the general effect was pretty, and, at any rate, seemed a room to live and love in. ... Harriet wore the new apron, accompanied by an air of excitement, and had polished her face with Sunlight soap so that it looked like a burnished brick—if there is such a thing.

In many places the wording is more suitable for a book for a small child:

Near one of the windows stood the table—the table so carefully laid and bedecked with the sweet red roses. The canaries had gone to roost in their beribboned cages, but Boy was on guard, not half so interested in his bright favour as in the smell of cooking which stole up the stairs and made Eileen quite nervous lest something should be burnt.

The attempts at epigram are not particularly exhilarating, and several of them we should feel inclined to call sheer nonsense.

We have dealt at some length with this novel because, according to the publisher's statement accompanying it, Miss Mansfield's former book is in its twelfth thousand, and we are concerned in the standard of literature such a circulation should imply. It is possible to appreciate, though not necessarily applaud, the author who gives us a strong, stern presentation

of a phase of the emotions, without comment, saying as it might be "Here you are—take it or leave it, but it is life"; and we can value the writer who laboriously and earnestly endeavours to trace the crimson thread of passion through its sinuous course among the other threads of our existence; but this painting of a very common and sordid *liaison* in the tints of purity it is impossible to respect. We understand that Miss Mansfield has started this week for an exploration of the upper regions of the Nile. If she contemplates pursuing the career of a novelist, it would have been more advisable to stay at home and explore the possibilities of the English language.

## SHORTER REVIEWS

*The Baronet's Wife.* By FLORENCE WARDEN. (T. Fisher Unwin, 6s.)

FOUR months ago we noticed a book of Miss Florence Warden's with moderate praise, and on finishing the perusal of her latest novel we feel strongly inclined to waive the critic's right and merely repeat the historic formula attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "People who like this sort of thing will find it just the sort of thing they like." For the story is a good one, with a mystery, a plausible villain, burglars, thieves, poisoners (very genteel and moving in the best society), and a love affair, quite in the style of the early seventies. But, somehow, it lacks grip; it is a tale, and nothing more. The desire to know the solution of the mystery why the baronet's bold, bad, beautiful wife acted so curiously and suspiciously—will probably carry most readers through to the end, but there is small profit to be gained for their trouble. The idea that a lady of title should be a receiver of stolen property, should secrete in her room the proceeds of burglaries at neighbouring country houses, even if she was rather afraid of the guest who persuaded her to become his accomplice, is too crude for our liking. No woman with a grain of intelligence would have allowed the matter to go so far; she would have told the husband whom she professed to love so well. The book will form a pleasant enough companion for a railway journey—for some people. For our part, if it were daytime and the sun were shining, we should prefer to look out of the carriage window.

*The Capture of Paul Beck.* By M. McDONNELL BODKIN, K.C. (T. Fisher Unwin, 6s.)

IF we are to suffer more of Sherlock Holmes, as seems probable, it is well that some kindly and clever author should have provided us with a very human and fascinating detective romance by way of a homœopathic antidote. To those of our readers who like a story that has to be consumed at one sitting we can recommend this last adventure of Paul Beck. The plotting and counter-plotting of Beck and Miss Dora Myrl, the young lady inquisitor, are irresistible, and the two love affairs which run parallel with the other complications are depicted with a humour which is admirable and a style which shapes itself capitally to the nature of its burden. The "capture," we presume, refers to Beck himself, and not to the *coup* which forms the climax of the story; for the wily one falls a victim to the manifold attractions of his rival, Miss Myrl, and is transfixed by the little detective whose random arrows surprise most of us sooner or later. At the opening chapters we rather resented the old idea of a man having a "double," but we are able to forgive the use of this ancient and honourable device by reason of the deftness of its exploitation—it has rarely been employed to better effect.



A scene on the New York Stock Exchange during a time of panic is strongly portrayed, and seems worthy of quotation:

Early that day a bolt had fallen from the blue. In a quiet hour, and without a hint of warning, a ferocious attack had been delivered on Marconi's Wireless, and the Standard Oil showed boldly in the front of the battle, leading the bears. No security could hold against such an attack. The Marconi prices broke at once. Without rest or respite the shares were driven down headlong. Still the bears sold and sold. The investors caught the panic and joined in the stampede. Then of a sudden one man sprang into the breach. Like a Horatius on the bridge he held his ground while the enemy stormed in their thousands around him. . . . Almost, as it were, in a breath he snapped up from the yelling crowd half a dozen offers at once. His "Done," "Done," "Done," "Done," emphasised with pointing forefinger, came sharp and fast as revolver shots. Then there was a pause, and the Standard Oil leaders flung themselves upon him. He took all their lances on his shield, never yielding an inch, while block after block of the shares were hurled at him. The conflict was still in full swing when Armitage had rushed into the club smoking-room and gathered its progress from the cablegrams in the evening paper. The men round the tape, that unemotionally rolled out its wild news, could almost see the blows struck in this conflict of giants at the other side of the broad ocean. It was a game in which the stakes were piled up in millions, and its varying fortunes gripped the hearts of the speculators.

The vicissitudes of Mr. Beck probably do not come to an untimely end with his wedding bells—they ought, rather, to begin a fresh and most interesting stage, surely, at the marriage of two clever detectives—and as soon as Mr. Bodkin sees fit we shall be glad to welcome him again.

*The Ways of Men.* By HERBERT FLOWERDEW. (T. Fisher Unwin, 6s.)

FOR ingenuity of plot we suppose Wilkie Collins has rarely been surpassed—it used to be quite a brain-racking affair to read his novels and remember the necessary relationships and evolutions of his characters. Without trying us to that extent, Mr. Flowerdew has shown a skill in the construction of his romance, a pleasant, competent manner of unfolding it, and a consideration for the smoothness of his language, which reminds us somewhat of the author of "The Woman in White," and which we can only regard with admiration. He sustains the purely narrative form at a high level throughout a fairly long book, with hardly a page of description, and only so much psychological exposition as shall suffice to elucidate the actions of the chief performers: this in itself is an excellent thing to have accomplished. We do not intend to spoil a good story, for those of our readers who will see it, by skeletonising it, but we may mention that the ordinance which forbade a man to marry his deceased wife's sister forms a source of complication to at least three persons. Aaron Harbinger, the principal character (he is scarcely a hero in his behaviour), does commit this "crime"—the date of events being just before the law was altered—and the tangle is tightened by a flirtation which lands him in a predicament, financially and socially, so degraded that we can find it in us to mingle pity with our contempt. All comes right in the end; but it would be most unfair to let the secret out in a review.

The prim Canon Porteous is quite a capital bit of character-drawing; we think our readers will appreciate the following little sketch of him:

It was the Canon, of course, who made the Rectory seem like a prison to Clarice. He was one of those thoroughly good men who make their goodness a little uncomfortable for those around them. He wished to impose on his household the ascetic rules which he rigidly practised himself. As Clarice grew up and chose her own dresses, her own method of arranging her hair, and her own pursuits, she found herself for ever

exciting the Canon's disapproval. He had trained his timid wife to at least an outward submission to his wishes, but Clarice was one of the modern, sensible girls who think for themselves and are difficult to suppress. When Canon Porteous rebuked her for worldliness she made a merry retort, and left to herself she would either have "managed" the good man completely, and succeeded in following her own way in everything, or have shaken the dust of Morley Rectory from her pretty feet, and sought independence elsewhere. But the deep affection for her aunt which kept her there, made her also more amenable to its rules, and for the sake of Aunt Helena's peace of mind she never wore her prettiest dresses, read modern novels by stealth, and did a great deal more plain sewing for the poor of the parish than she cared for.

The narration is clever, in the best of taste, and exhibits hardly a fault in its composition. The author permits himself the use of the word "phenomenal" in the sense of "extraordinary"; the expression "approached nearer" is tautological, and probably merely an oversight, judging from the general care and nicety of phrasing shown throughout the book; otherwise we have nothing but praise. The interest is well maintained to the final page, and we congratulate Mr. Flowerdew on having carried his task to completion in a virile and distinctive manner.

*What Woman Wills.* By LUCAS CLEEVE. (Long, 6s.)

LUCAS CLEEVE is an old favourite among novel readers. What is more, she is possessed of quite exceptional skill in the setting forward of a story, and she wastes no words. We do not know that the present "What Woman Wills" is in any sense a really enjoyable tale, particularly as the author has dragged in the now fashionable sacrifice of clothing in the interests of art. But, although the nude is here, Lucas Cleeve has managed to present it without suggestiveness. And as readers of fiction have long since given up blushing they may possibly be amused, instead of shocked or disgusted. The book is well written, and it ends as it should—that is to say, happily. We can specially recommend "What Woman Wills" to readers who have faith in the ultimate beauty of the American character. It appears that those persons who imagine that America is given over to dollar-hunting lack wit; for the Americans, according to Lucas Cleeve, have souls, and they believe in "art." Yet she makes her pretty, engaging, wilful, fluffy-haired heroine marry a Frenchman—or is he a French Jew?—by the name of Eph Marks.

*Flower of the World.* By MRS. HENRY TIPPETT. (Long, 6s.)

MRS. TIPPETT commences operations with the appended dedication:

TO  
H. A. L.  
WITH GRATEFUL LOVE DO I DEDICATE THIS  
THE FIRST-BORN OF MY PEN.

We should be sorry to be unkind to an author who can write of a first book in this feeling manner. At the same time, we do not consider "Flower of the World" in any sense an entertaining novel. Mrs. Tippet's view of the world and its flowers is, on the whole, a rather melancholy view. And some of her pictures of women are quite distressing. We doubt if she understands the female intellect at all. Her views on most matters are correct and conventional, however, and persons who can swallow her hero and her feminine villain may read the book to the end, where they will learn that "Margaret's wedding-day broke gloriously." How one longs for a novelist who will take the bull by the horns, as it were, and marry off Margaret, or Peggy, or Joan, as the case may be, in common wet weather.

## THE MATERIAL DELIGHT OF BOOKS

LET us not start upon cross purposes. Material is an adjective of various turns, but the delight we have in mind follows no special richness of trapping in the books themselves, and has but little to do with rare bindings and limited editions. Such may call it forth as well as another, but it is independent of them. *Format*, in short (that blessedly mysterious word!), hardly affects at all this pleasure-giving quality, for to those sensible of it the charm is rather one of friendship, and, above all, association, than of allurements that can be bought for a handful of guineas in the market-place. To a book-lover of this kidney his treasures will but grow the more precious for the signs they bear of honourable usage. For him a battered Virgil, or his well-thumbed "Elia," will have a value greater even than that of the marvellous copy of *Les Cent Nouvelles*, "bound for Margaret of Valois by Clovis Eve, and powdered with the gilt daisies that Queen had selected for her device." It is to this material fashion of delight that belong (if we will but recall them honestly) those earliest book-memories that come back to us from childhood. In the nursery, at least, a book is no mere lifeless instrument for the conveyance, in so many printed pages, of its author's meaning; it is itself a friendly and beloved object, ravishing as to the outside with flaunting hues, and rich pictorially within (so illustrators have their use); a thing of solidity, moreover, and sensible weight, apt on occasion for the buttressing of leaden armies. If it be urged that this last advantage is one but faintly pertinent to literature, let us descend a little in the House of Life, one stair-flight, say, and recall what volumes were those cherished by older children in the schoolroom. Many we have in mind, goodly tomes all, and dear to memory almost as much for themselves as for the enchantments they contained. Henty, gloriously fat, and trimmed as to his edges with an olive smoothness grateful to the finger; and Crusoe, a little stiff, perhaps, until the back of him was broken by adversity, and he, perforce, unbent, but ever afterwards a friend. Best of all, an aged "Tower of London," coverless, but so enriched with various and haunting pictures that even to turn the leaves was an adventure in itself. One picture especially there was, more blood-curdling than its fellows (was it Herne seen by lightning on the Terrace, or the Destruction of the Oak?), inasmuch that its alarming influence was felt even in the pages on either side of it, and merely to open the book at haphazard in its neighbourhood was to experience goose-flesh. They publish Ainsworth as a "pocket classic" now, but who will tell us that the old thrill remains!

A little later still, in the same room perhaps, or in the library below, one sees other friends. Dickens it is now, and Lever; Thackeray not yet, and even afterwards loved rather despite than for its qualities as an actual book. But the others! Dombey was the first, a chance discovery, the most wonderful that ever happened. To sit long winter afternoons through, curled in one of those great thrones before the library fire, with Dombey open upon one's knees, and (if the gods were more than ordinary kind) an orange, sugar-plugged, at hand for an occasional stimulant to joy, was this Paradise enow for a boy who ought at that very moment, probably, to have been taking unpleasant exercise out of doors? Plague upon the pedants and bibliophiles (or so they call themselves!) who would preserve a First Edition from the combined effects of

fire and orange-juice! What do they know of the delight of books? We can see that one to-day—and smell the musty, intoxicating aroma of its pages. There was on most of them a certain brown stain of rust or damp that permeated the whole, and broke out most strongly, in a rash like measles, upon the plates. Looking back with older eyes we may deplore this, but at the time its presence did but give, we think, an added interest. They belonged to the story, these familiar freckles, and had, we are sure, their part in our enjoyment of it. Florence, Captain Cuttle, Mr. Carker, even the entrancing Toots himself—would they be to us the same magical beings, unbronzed and spotless? We doubt it much.

There were other volumes also of this time, but of a different company, that point our moral. School-books these, held then in common ownership, and small personal regard, but since how dear! Who amongst us can meet them now unmoved, or who is there to whom the chance echo of a classic phrase (even the tedious history of Balbus and his never-ended wall) will not bring back a vision of the very page from which it first was conned—a page so blotted, torn and scribbled over as to have gained a meaning of its own, and need deciphering like ancient manuscript? Has that no value for itself, and no delight? Laughter and tears and memory are in the very feel of it.

Nor, on this matter of the sensual attraction (so to call it) of certain books, as things answerable to sight and touch, should yet another proof be overlooked. Let any who still doubt remember their own experience, coming by chance on some familiar and beloved work in a strange house, it may be, or the parlour of an inn. Even if the outward semblance be as we ourselves have always known it (and how much more if not) a subtle change it is, nevertheless, upon the whole. There are the same friendly and companionable words, the pages that we could repeat almost by heart, but over what impassable barrier do they now call to us, with thin and alien voices? The book, in short, is but an echo of itself, lacking altogether the full-throated appeal of that upon our own shelves at home.

Moreover, if this be true of one belonging to a friend, what can be said of those impersonal and soulless bodies, boasting no human ownership, the merchandise of the Circulating Library? These at best are but the courtesans of their kind, consolers of no man's private hearth, but trafficking their favours to whosoever boasts twopence with which to hire them. Does he exist who has gotten balm from Boots' or comfort out of Mudie? Even pencilled comments in the margin cannot bind the library copy with an enduring chain; the jade will but snigger at them and you on the knees of her next patron.

The whole argument then comes back to this, that in certain bound and printed pages there lurks, indefinable but real, a charm that is peculiar to themselves, linking their material presence so closely to their inward grace that each is but a portion of one whole. Happy, thrice happy, the man who has his shelves full of them. Such a one will neither a borrower nor a lender be willingly, for from this practise he gains small pleasure, and from that he shrinks as too callous a treatment of his dear ones. Well-thumbed they may be, and the better loved for it, but the thumbs must be his own. Woe to the ill-omened mark that shall betray the grasp of the stranger! *Ille* (whoever he was) *nefasto te posuit die!* and by so much is the old intimate and material delight of that especial book lessened in its master's eyes. Quick! let indiarubber be called for, and the horror, as far as possible, removed. The patient is recovering already; but never again shall it venture from the hands that love and cherish it.

A. E.



## DOCKET

THE N.E.D. suggests only possible connection with *dock*. Apart from an unexplained *doket* in the Towneley Mysteries, which, possibly, is quite a different word, *docket* means, roughly (15-19 cent.), "abstract, summary, memorandum." Its more special meanings are "endorsement, label, ticket" (Phillips, 1706), and "warrant certifying payment of Custom dues." The form is indifferently *docquet*, *docket*, *dogget*, the latter being the earliest quoted (*doggettes*, 1483), while the verb *dogget* occurs as late as 1692. Minsheu's definition is probably the oldest: "*Docket* is a breife in writing. . . . West\* writeth it *dogget*, by whom it seemeth to be some small piece of paper, or parchment, containing the effect of a large writing." If *dogget* be the original form, this may be It. *doghette*, a derivative of *doga*. For *doga* Florio gives only "a deal board to make hogsheds with," but Torriano gives *doga* . . . "by met. a bende in armory, a garbe or border about a garment," and *doghette*, the dim. of *doga*, "by met. bendlets in armory." Veneroni, ed. Castelli, has "*doghette*, bandelettes, en armoirie, Bindelwerck in der Wappen-Kunst, ligulæ heraldicæ." The word is not in the Voc. della Crusca, or, apparently, in any of the modern It. dictionaries, but it seems a legitimate formation from *doga*. For the business use of a heraldic term, cf. E. *label*, with which *docket* is sometimes synonymous (N.E.D. *docket*, 7). Altieri gives "*doga* [*lista*, *fregia*], stripe"; and E. *list*, now synonymous with some meanings of *docket*, originally meant "strip, selvage," etc.; cf. various meanings of Mod. G. *Leiste*. Cf. also *schedule* (G. *Zettel*), F. *bordereau*, also to some extent synonymous with *docket*, both diminutives meaning originally "shred, strip," and E. *scroll*, M.E. *scrowe*, from O.F. *escroue*, originally "shred." Assuming the original form to be *dogget*, the change to *docket* admits of various explanations. The word may have been influenced by the group of words, *brocket*, *cocket*, *locket*, *pocket*, *socket* (Skinner even derives it from *ticket*), by the verb *dock*,† to curtail (from which Minsheu appears to derive it), or even by *document*, or, as the N.E.D. suggests, by the modern noun *dock*. But the most probable influence is that of *cocket*, Custom House warrant, with which it would naturally occur ("*Cockets* and *dockets* and drawbacks and other jargon," Swift, 1712), and with which it was occasionally synonymous (N.E.D. *docket*, 8). That, in spite of all these influences, the "g" form survived so late is strong presumptive evidence of its being the original. The first occurrence (1483) is early for an It. word, nor have I any evidence of *doghette* being used commercially in It. The latter objection is not fatal; cf. *label* and *ticket*, both used in E. in senses unknown in F.

ERNEST WEEKLEY.

## CORRESPONDENCE

MR. WATTS-DUNTON.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—The *English Review* for the present month has made a certain stir among amateurs of English verse by the publication, for the first time, of a humorous ballad by Rossetti. To give to the world, twenty-six years after his death, a complete long poem, and one in an altogether new vein, by so great a man, is, whatever the merit of that poem may be, to make literary history, and it might be thought that any person to whom the privilege of publishing it fell would not do his work otherwise than conscientiously and satisfactorily. Surely it is a serious matter to transfer the words of a dead

genius from the written to the printed page; a solemn duty to give as exact an equivalent, character for character, as printer's type allows!

Had the person who is responsible for the publication of "The Ballad of Jan Van Hunks" (presumably Mr. Watts-Dunton, who owns the manuscript, and contributes "a few words of explanation" of "its appearance in print at this time of day") stopped short at *printing* the forty-four stanzas of the ballad, the accuracy of the transcript might never have been suspected; but he has enabled us to judge of the way in which the work has been done by adding a "*fac-simile* of last verses. . . ." This photographic reproduction gives the last sixteen lines, which, as written in the poet's large, clear handwriting, run as follows:—

"A shrieking wretch hung over his back  
As he sank through nether space.  
Of such a rider on such a steed  
What tongue the flight shall trace?

The bearer shook his burthen off  
As he reached his retinue:  
He's flung him into a knot of fiends,  
Red, yellow, green and blue:—  
'I've brought a pipe for my private use,—  
Go trim it, some of you!'

They've sliced the very crown from his head,—  
Worse tonsure than a monk's,—  
Lopped arms and legs,—stuck a red-hot tube  
In his wretchedest of trunks;  
And when the Devil wants his pipe,  
They bring him Jan Van Hunks."

Now for the printed version:—

"A shrieking wretch hung over his back  
As he sank through nether space.  
Of such a rider on such a steed  
What tongue the flight shall trace?

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\*Thomas West, fl. 1568-94, Symbolaeographia, 1590 (D.N.B.).

†A *docked*, or short introduction of a matter, *documentum* (Gouldman).

The bearer shook his burden off  
As he reached his retinue:  
He has flung him into a knot of fiends,  
Red, yellow, green and blue:  
'I have brought a pipe for my private use,  
Go trim it, some of you!'

They have sliced the very crown from his head,  
Worse tonsure than a monk's—  
Lopped arms and legs, stuck a red-hot tube  
In his wretchedest of trunks;  
And when the Devil wants his pipe  
They bring him Jan Van Hunks."

Compare the two, and you will observe no less than ten variations in eleven lines (from "The bearer . . ." to ". . . his pipe")! What is to be thought of this? What was Mr. Watts-Dunton—who describes the manuscript as "one of my most cherished possessions"—doing to make, or to allow to be made, these purposeless, but apparently intentional departures from the original?

There is no reason at all to suppose these lines are printed less accurately than the remainder of the poem, which contains (if we may trust the *English Review* even so far) 264 lines. By a perfectly legitimate deduction we may therefore assume that the published version contains about one hundred and eighty errors.

The poet's punctuation has been revised for him; his spelling modernised; his colloquialisms translated; his metre modified. This we can see for ourselves. But what else may not have been done to improve Rossetti's work? Perhaps a phrase or two has been softened, as being not quite suited to family reading; the sequence of the stanzas altered in a few cases, thereby enhancing the effect of the whole; certain stanzas, below the level of the rest in point of excellence, or retarding the progress of the narrative, omitted. Those of us who love Rossetti's work, and who at the same time hate all editions of notable writings which are modernised, abridged, expurgated, adapted to domestic or Protestant perusal, furnished with *apparatus criticus* or *variorum* references or running commentary, or in any other manner deformed or defiled, would surely be glad to know what this ballad is really like; and it is to be hoped that when the next edition of its author's works is issued, a correct transcription will enable them to do so.

BATTISCOMBE GUNN.

78, Gower Street, W.C.  
January 13th, 1909.

#### "I WOULD LIKE."

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—I read, quite recently, the following sweeping assertion in "The King's English," published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford: "*I would like*, is not English." As a linguist, I beg to submit my humble opinion in the matter: When *I would like* is meant as the translation for *j'aimerais*, *je voudrais*, in French, it is not English, and *I should like* must therefore be used instead; because when one speaks of things over which one's *will* can have no control, as for instance, when one speaks of *one's feelings*, which is the case here, *shall*, in the first person, expresses a simple future event, and *should* (in the first person) a simple condition.

Conditional mood, present tense of the verb <i>To Like</i> .	Conditionnel présent du verbe <i>Aimer</i> .
---	---

I should like.	J'aimerais.
Thou wouldst like.	Tu aimerais.
He or she would like.	Il ou elle aimerait.
We should like.	Nous aimerions.
You would like.	Vous aimeriez.
They would like.	Ils ou elles aimeraient.

But when *I would like* means, in French, *je voudrais aimer* ou *j'aimais habituellement*, *j'aimais*, à suivre, etc., the use of it, to my mind, is justified.

#### FIRST EXAMPLE.

<i>I would like</i> that man (if I could) on account of his family, but, unfortunately, I cannot: he is such a worthless fellow.*	<i>Je voudrais aimer</i> cet homme (si je le pouvais) à cause de sa famille, mais, malheureusement, je ne le puis: c'est un être si indigne!
---	--

\*This example has been borrowed from the *Treatise on Shall and Will* p. 64 published by HACHETTE & Co., Charing Cross, London.

The meaning of *I would like that man*, here, is equivalent to *I should like to like that man*, or *I should like to esteem that man*. *I would*, here, is the translation of the Conditional mood, present tense, of the French Verb *Vouloir*, (*je voudrais*),†

#### EXAMPLE.

I would like.	Je voudrais aimer.
Thou wouldst like.	Tu voudrais aimer, or tu aimerais.
He or she would like.	Il ou elle voudrait aimer, or il ou elle aimerait.
We would like.	Nous voudrions aimer.
You would like.	Vous voudriez aimer, or vous aimeriez.
They would like.	Ils ou elles voudraient aimer, or ils ou elles aimeraient.

In the above sentences, the conditional of the Defective and Irregular verb *Will* forms, with regard to the verb *to like*, a kind of auxiliary which is in common use in the English language, whenever *volition* is meant.

In the following examples, *would* refers merely to habitual practice:

#### SECOND EXAMPLE.

I would like sweets when I was a child (i.e.—I used to like sweets, etc.)‡	J'aimais les bonbons (à suivre, or habituellement) quand j'étais enfant.
Thou wouldst like, etc.	Tu aimais, etc.
He or she would like, etc.	Il ou elle aimait, etc.
We would like, etc.	Nous aimions, etc.
You would like, etc.	Vous aimiez, etc.
They would like, etc.	Ils ou elles aimaient, etc.

#### EXAMPLES FROM ENGLISH AUTHORS.

Presently *I would hear* plaintive little chirrups to Boxer, and when I turned round, *I would see* Boxer and Jenny coming amicably along side by side.—LADY BARKER.

Soudain, j'entendais (j'avais l'habitude d'entendre) de petits cris plaintifs à l'adresse de Boxer, et quand je me retournais, je voyais (je voyais habituellement) Boxer et Jenny arriver d'une manière tout amicale, marchant à côté l'un de l'autre.

She was a good mother . . . yet she *would* always love my brother above Mary.—CHARLES LAMB.

C'était une bonne mère . . . cependant elle avait toujours plus de tendresse pour mon frère que pour Marie.

When he was irritated, he *would rave* like a madman.—MASON'S GRAMMAR.

Quand il était irrité, il délirait (il avait l'habitude de délirer) comme un fou.

We *would sit out* in the air all day, and read and talk.—BESANT & RICE.

Nous nous asseyions (nous avions l'habitude de nous asseoir) dehors, toute la journée, pour lire et causer.

For want of better things to do, I was often singing and guitar-scraping, and we *would have* many a concert.—THACKERAY.

Faute d'autres distractions, je chantais souvent et pinçais de la guitare, et nous donnions (nous donnions habituellement) bien des concerts.

The smaller birds did not appear to be at all afraid of me, but *would hop* about me.—SWIFT.

Les petits oiseaux ne semblaient pas du tout me craindre, mais sautillaient (habituellement) autour de moi.

‡ It might be urged that, for the Imperfect tense of the Indicative, which expresses *habit*, *I liked* or *I used to like*, should be employed instead of *I would like*, in common parlance. Granted. But the following question now arises whether, as an examiner, I should be justified in marking *I would like* as a mistake, in the case under consideration? This common Hebrew form being often used in English.

#### A FRENCH LINGUIST.

["*I would like*" is perfectly good English, and "A French Linguist" may take it from us that the book to which he refers is not always a reliable guide.—ED.]

†This case, I admit, is theoretically possible, but of very rare occurrence in practice.



## HERBERT VIVIAN AND OSCAR WILDE.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—I have noted for some months past in *John Bull* Mr. Vivian's reiterated depreciation of Wilde's writings, and perhaps it would not be inopportune to ask what has caused Mr. Vivian to change his opinion of Wilde's merits as a writer. Has he forgotten the time when he asked Wilde to honour him by writing an introduction to a volume of his own reminiscences? There can be little doubt, as Mr. Vivian acknowledged in a letter which is still extant, that the whole interest of the book would have been confined to the introduction.

Oxford, January 12th.

C. S. M.

## A PHENOMENAL GENIUS.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

SIR,—I trust some better voice than mine may be raised in protest against the misdirected energy of Mr. E. Wake Cook. Mr. Cook's extraordinary views cannot be allowed to pass without comment, although to the majority of your readers his letter should carry its own condemnation palpably enough; besides, this letter is in the nature of an impertinence, being but a *réchauffé* of one written by Mr. Cook to *Vanity Fair* some years ago. In the *Vanity Fair* letter he says, speaking of Martin's wonderful composition on any scale (*sic*): "On any scale from four by three inches, up to fourteen by ten feet." One should notice how, in deference, apparently, to the literary atmosphere of THE ACADEMY, this becomes "a twelve-foot canvas or a four-inch wood-block." Half the number of words, but still exhibiting the same precious gem of thought.

At the beginning of Mr. Cook's letter he speaks of Martin as "the most amazing genius that ever appeared in the art world." At the conclusion thereof he implies that this same John Martin achieved the ultra-ridiculous. This very work—which he has dubbed ridiculous—is, he goes on to say, "an amazing work," and "should find a national home." Well! what is one to do with a man like that? And Bulwer Lytton! Good heavens! Bulwer Lytton! in the name of all opacities, Bulwer Lytton! Mr. Cook quotes from him—he does, indeed—and, what's more, he acknowledges his author in THE ACADEMY, a courtesy which he neglects elsewhere. In conclusion, it would be interesting to know what harm Newcastle has ever done to Mr. Cook.

In the words of one of Mr. Cook's most ardent admirers: "The time has now come for a little fresh air to be let in upon the stuffy atmosphere which surrounds these special pleaders." Extract from a letter signed "A British Painter" in *Vanity Fair*, November 26th, 1903.

CALEB PORTER.

Green Room Club, Leicester Square,  
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